Section I (Amendments to the Claims)

Please amend claims 1, 6, 19 and 20, cancel claim 18, and add new claims 21 and 22, as set out in the following listing of the claims 1-22 of the application.

1. **(Currently amended)** A method of preparing nanoparticles, having a size of less than 1 μm, for the administration of active ingredients, comprising the steps of:

(a) dissolving a biodegradable polymer together with a polyoxyethylene-derived block copolymer selected from poloxamers and poloxamines, in a nonpolar organic solvent to form a solution, the weight ratio of the biodiegradable polymer to the polyoxyethylene-derived polymer being between 1:0.1 and 1:3;

(b) adding, with stirring, the solution obtained in step (a) to a polar phase, wherein the biodegradable polymer has low solubility, precipitating the polymer and forming the nanoparticles;

(c) eliminating the organic solvent;

(d) isolating the particles;

wherein ~~the~~ an active ingredient is dissolved in the organic solvent used in (a) before or after step (a), or is dissolved in a small volume of ~~[[the]]~~ an aqueous phase, which is then dispersed in the organic solvent used in (a), before or after step (a)~~, and wherein the method does not involve a cholesterol compound~~.

2. **(Original)** A method according to claim 1, further comprising lyophilizing the nanoparticles obtained.

3. **(Original)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the biodegradable polymer comprises a polyester.

4. **(Original)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the biodegradable polymer comprises a polyanhydride.

5. **(Original)** A method according to claim 3, wherein the polyester is selected from among polycaprolactone, polylactic acid, polylactic co-glycolic acid and their mixtures.

6. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the block copolymer ~~comprises~~ is a poloxamer.

7. **(Original)** A method according to claim 6, wherein the poloxamer has a molecular weight comprised between 1,000 and 25,000 Daltons.

8. **(Original)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the block copolymer is a poloxamine.

9. **(Original)** A method according to claim 8, wherein the poloxamine has a molecular weight comprised between 1,000 and 25,000 Daltons.

10. **(Original)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the active ingredient is selected from molecules with therapeutic properties, vaccines and cosmetic ingredients.

11. **(Previously Presented)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of the biodiegradable polymer to the polyoxyethylene-derived polymer is between 1:1 and 1:3.

12. **(Original)** Nanoparticles for the administration of pharmaceutically- or cosmetically-active ingredients, having a size of less than 1 μm, as produced by the method of claim 1.

13. **(Original)** Lyophilized nanoparticles for the administration of pharmaceutically- or cosmetically-active ingredients, having a size of less than 1 μm, as produced by the method of claim 2.

14. **(Original)** A composition comprising nanoparticles according to claim 12.

15. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical or cosmetic composition comprising nanoparticles according to claim 12.

16. **(Original)** A composition comprising nanoparticles according to claim 13.

17. **(Original)** A pharmaceutical or cosmetic composition comprising nanoparticles according to claim 13.

18. **(Cancelled)**

19. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1, consisting of steps (a) to (d) and the additional step of (i) dissolving an active ingredient in the organic solvent used in (a) before or after step (a), or (ii) dissolving an active ingredient in a small volume of an aqueous phase, which is then dispersed in the organic solvent used in (a), before or after step (a).

20. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 1, wherein the biodegradable polymer is a polyester or polyanhydride, the block copolymer is a poloxamer, and the weight ratio of the biodiegradable polymer to the ~~polyoxyethylene-derived polymer~~ poloxamer is between 1:1 and 1:3.

21. **(New)** A method of preparing nanoparticles incorporating an active ingredient, comprising:

dissolving polymers, comprising polylactic co-glycolic acid and a poloxamer, in dichloromethane to form a solution;

adding the solution under stirring conditions to a polar phase including ethanol and water, to yield a liquid medium and form the nanoparticles therein; and

removing dichloromethane and ethanol from the liquid medium, to concentrate the nanoparticles in aqueous medium;

wherein the active ingredient is dissolved in the dichloromethane before or after the polymers are dissolved therein, or the active ingredient is dissolved in an aqueous phase that is dispersed in the dichloromethane before or after the polymers are dissolved therein.

22. **(New)** The method of claim 21, wherein the active ingredient is dissolved in an aqueous phase that is dispersed in the dichloromethane before or after the polymers are dissolved therein.